



Memo

Date: 01/22/21
To: Haines Borough Assembly
From: Carolann Wooton, EOC Commander
RE: Beach Road Evacuation Zone

Dear Assembly Members,

During the emergency meeting regarding emergency access across the Beach Road slide and evacuation zone, please consider the following information. The EOC does not recommend this measure at this time for the following reasons:

1. The slide area has been determined to be unsafe by geologists who are experts in their field. Their exact recommendation was to *"allow no use or traffic in the red zone pending further investigation because of imminent threat of another catastrophic slide."*

It is important to note that while the current weather pattern of freezing temperatures may make the slide in the road bed "stable", the exact opposite can be said of the large bedrock crack above the slide and evacuation area. The freezing weather does not improve the stability of the bedrock material above. The EOC has been told it could release at any time with no warning and could include up to 250,000 cubic meters of material that would have a catastrophic consequence. This is particularly concerning after the smaller slides that occurred as little as two days ago signifying an unstable area.

A decision to provide access across the red zone would encourage residents, potentially in larger number, to spend longer periods of time in the evacuation zone as they try to gather their belongings. The increased human exposure to this hazard, increases the potential consequences of a slide, if one were to occur. Risk reduction measures may be possible to support temporary road access but have yet to be defined or presented.

2. The potential to lose the SEOC emergency funding to cover the cost of assessing the future of the slide.

The Haines EOC requested emergency assistance from the State EOC (SEOC) *because* we had so many residents without access to their homes. The recommendation for further analysis comes with a hefty price tag that Haines cannot bear, making the need for State assistance emergent. Assisting residents with access to their homes and properties was deemed an emergency and the SEOC agreed to access "immediate needs funding" to assist the Borough with performing this study they could not afford. Putting access through, to allow residents to go across the red zone could negate the emergent nature of the assistance and could potentially leave the Haines Borough with huge challenge in determining how best to address the issue going forward.

3. This slide zone is still an active SAR area and as such is extremely sensitive.

Temporary access has been a topic of discussion in the EOC the entire time since the Beach Road slide occurred. Professional construction of temporary access over the slide area may be able to be done in a manner that does not negatively impact slide stability in the road area, however, the evacuation zone still remains at risk from another catastrophic slide. While this risk may be acceptable to some, it is not the recommendation of the EOC to proceed with improving and opening temporary access at this time. We encourage the community to continue supporting the displaced residents while we work on finding a safer resolution to the situation

The EOC recognizes the extreme pressure put on the Assembly to approve developing emergency access for residents, and the difficulty the Assembly will have evaluating a proposal to do so. However, based on the high potential for adverse consequences the EOC must recommend not approving such proposals at this time.